

CSISG Q2 RESULTS: EDUCATION SECTOR

Finding a good fit for varied needs

Meeting the diverse needs of students is a challenging task, but one that can pay off for tertiary institutions

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SINGAPORE – What are some of the key ways private education institutions can try to meet their students' needs? Ensuring a student's perceived suitability to the programme he's enrolled in, having good student support services and good teaching staff, according to the findings of a recently released consumer satisfaction survey.

Last month, the Institute of Service Excellence at the Singapore Management University (ISES) released the 2015 Q2 results of its Customer Satisfaction Index of Singapore (CSISG), which included the Public Education and Private Education sectors.

The CSISG score for the Public Education sector improved by 1.6 per cent from last year to 74.1 in 2015. The Private Education sector, which is made up of Private Education Institutions (PEIs), recorded a 2.5-per-cent year-on-year decline to 64.1 points.

FIT FOR PURPOSE

According to ISES, the Private Education sector survey results showed that teaching matters (which relates to factors like the overall quality, dedication and mutual respect shown by teaching staff), student support and course fit were the top three drivers of students' perceptions of quality.



SECTOR	2015	YEAR-ON-YEAR % CHANGE
Public Education	74.1	↑ 1.6%
Polytechnics	69.8	↓ 1.8%
Singapore Poly	74.8	↓ 2.3%
Ngee Ann Poly	70.5	↑ 0.5%
Nanyang Poly	63.6	↓ 4.3%
Temasek Poly	73.4	↑ 2.5%
Republic Poly	67.1	↓ 3.4%
Universities	75.6	↑ 2.8%
NTU	73.3	↑ 3.8%
SMU	79.1	↓ 0.2%
NUS	76.5	↑ 2.9%
ITE	74.0	↓ 0.4%
Private Education	64.1	↓ 2.5%

SOURCE: ISES

GRAPHICS: ONG ZE TENG

DigiPen Institute of Technology Singapore, for instance, assigns a faculty member to advise new students during their first semester and help them determine if their course of study is relevant to their needs.

Said Ms Caroline Tan, senior manager at the school's Admissions Office/ Student Affairs Office: "Students meet their advisers in their third and eighth weeks to discuss course fit, course sequence and other academic issues."

To improve services and student satisfaction, the school also collects feedback forms from students at the end of every semester.

Said Ms Tan: "For instance, if the students feel they need more time to work in school, we might extend the operating hours of our Academic Support Center. We also hire senior students at the centre on a part-time basis as teaching assistants to provide academic support to our freshmen and sophomore students."

Letting senior students mentor their

juniors can be an effective win-win strategy for both students and school. If implemented effectively, senior students develop leadership skills. Their younger cohort benefit from having seniors who may have experienced similar academic challenges.

JCU Singapore offers the JCU Singapore Mateship programme, an initiative that helps new students adapt to university life. The student-led and -run programme assigns a senior to mentor new students.

Said Mr Det Fischer, director, International and Marketing Division, JCU Singapore: "The Mateship programme is a platform for our students to expand their leadership potential and improve networking skills."

A HELPING HAND FOR STUDENTS

Schools can benefit by having a student body that is more satisfied with the institution and who could become effective brand ambassadors in future.

“The Mateship programme (at JCU Singapore) is a platform for our students to expand their leadership potential and improve networking skills.**”**

Mr Det Fischer
DIRECTOR,
INTERNATIONAL AND
MARKETING DIVISION,
JCU SINGAPORE

Schools in the private and public education sectors often do what they can to help students.

For one polytechnic student, support at school made a critical difference to his well-being. Mr Ahmad Madfoudz said he succumbed to depression during the course of his studies. Trying to keep the issue under wraps affected his personal life and studies. His school placed him under the supervision of a lecturer who contacted him regularly to find out how he was coping with his studies.

Said the 21-year-old: "She also gathered feedback from my other lecturers and tutors so she could advise me on academic matters. There were many times where I am sure I stretched her patience, but she never gave up on me."

"She has been influential in my recovery during this time of adversity. I have to give credit to all my other lecturers, who were as supportive. They definitely made a difference in my life, in and outside school."